

greatest endeavors. Join us in providing future generations their chance to reach beyond themselves. Join us in approving the international space station that will extend our reach into the future.

An old hymn talks about the future's broadening way. We can broaden it a little bit today by taking another step into the universe.

□ 0940

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. GANSKE], a distinguished freshman Republican member.

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the Roemer-Zimmer amendment.

The space program has done some wonderful things. I stood in awe when man first walked on the Moon. I stand in awe of the space shuttle every time it launches. Mr. Chairman, I also stand in awe of our nearly \$5 trillion national debt.

The space station may be a grand idea, but we must face the reality of its \$94 billion price tag.

We must face the reality that the entire project is based on overly ambitious goals. Costs for the space station have been rising while the target date for its completion has been slipping.

Many questions remain. To what extent will the Russians, and other international partners, participate in this project? Will the shuttle program be able to handle the increased flight schedule? Is the target cost of the space station going to skyrocket if Boeing cannot reach acceptable agreements with the subcontractors?

But the central question we must face has nothing to do with international agreements and theoretical science. The question is, How can we stand in this Chamber and heap additional debt on our children and grandchildren.

A vote for the Roemer-Zimmer amendment is not a vote against space exploration. It is a vote about economic realities.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE].

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. I thank the gentleman from California for yielding me the time.

Mr. Chairman, I say to the American people that President John F. Kennedy helped us dream by leading us into space exploration. How much excitement and inspiration and anticipation this country faced as we began that great historical effort, but in this era of budget cutting, some have argued that NASA has to take its share of budget cuts and the space station will have to be sacrificed as a result.

While I have great admiration for the gentleman from Indiana, I also admire the fiscal fairness that has to be done. It is imperative that we consider the efforts that NASA has already made, the cuts that it has already made and the efficiencies that it has already implemented.

The agency has been standing up and stepping ahead in the realm of cost reduction and efficiency improvements. As part of this zero-based review, NASA reduced its budget by \$5 billion over the next 5 years. Over the past 3 years the agency has reduced its multiyear budget plan by 35 percent, a savings to the American taxpayer of \$40 billion. To this point, the space station is on budget and on schedule.

You might say that is just something you have said; but, no, I have asked the project director directly: "Sir, are you on schedule? Are you on budget? Will you be monitoring your contractors? Will you be ensuring the American people that you will keep this project on budget and on schedule?"

"Yes, we will."

NASA has clearly demonstrated its commitment, to fiscal responsibility and deficit reduction. Do I see opportunities for inner city communities in the 18th Congressional District in Houston? Yes, I do. Education opportunities for children in my neighborhood schools. Frankly, I will say to the Members, jobs for minorities and women in America and business opportunities for minorities and women in America, that is the new spirit and the opportunity for NASA as it grows with space station.

Let us not forget the benefits we will all reap collectively: Research that can benefit all of us, from biotechnology, to environmental health, to cardiology, technological research in the areas of semiconductors and metal alloys, among others. We cannot ignore our international partners who have already contributed over \$9 billion in investment. We cannot ignore the potential for medical and technological breakthroughs that can result from this project.

Most importantly, Mr. Chairman, we cannot ignore the dreams and aspirations and hopes of all Americans that we too can explore. We can make the difference. Support the international space station, and do not support the Roemer amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will rise informally in order that the House may receive messages from the President.

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SEN-SENRENNER) assumed the chair.

#### SUNDRY MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sundry messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Mr. McCathran, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

□ 0950

#### DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 1996

The Committee resumed its sitting.

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. LOBIONDO].

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Roemer-Zimmer amendment to bring the space station to a halt. We need to be realistic about this project.

Let us look at the commitment that we are asking the American people to make. Through the year 2012, the space station will cost \$94 billion. Yes, \$94 billion with a "b." The operational life of the station is only 10 years.

Mr. Chairman, in my district, the southern portion of the State of New Jersey, I go to the church halls and the fire halls, and I look at my constituents and I hear them say that they were working harder than they have ever worked before and they do not feel they are getting ahead. I listen to them say how many of them are working two and three jobs and their spouse is working two and three jobs, and they want the U.S. Government, they want this Congress, to recognize the efforts that they are making and the sacrifices that they are making.

This is a priority that we cannot afford at this time. We are being asked to make many difficult choices. We are running through that process. We are committed to balancing the budget by the year 2002. But these are Federal dollars that we cannot afford. Maybe sometime in the future. Maybe after the budget is balanced. But to those hardworking citizens who are doing their best, who are doing their part to make this democracy work, I do not think we can look them in the eye and tell them that we are willing to spend \$94 billion on a program like this when we are asking them to make the sacrifices that we are.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California [Ms. LOFGREN].

(Ms. LOFGREN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to the amendment and for the space station.

Mr. ROEMER is a very fine and valued Member of this House and of the Science Committee where we serve together. But in this amendment I believe he is incorrect.

This amendment was also offered in the Science Committee authorization process, where it was defeated. During our discussion various members suggested specific benefits that may flow from the space station, including advances in the cure for cancer and the understanding of tumor growth.

These benefits may very well flow from the space station, but in speaking for the space station in committee I advanced this view: The